



Allergy versus cold symptoms

by [Amanda Kinseth](#)

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MYRTLE BEACH -- Whether it's a stuffy nose or some sneezing, you may not know whether to head to a primary care doctor or an allergist.

Deciphering the difference between cold and allergy symptoms can be tough right now because seasonal allergies have kicked into high gear.

A prick, and a stick, and some swelling. "We are testing her to grass, tree and weed pollen, dog, cats dust mites and mold," said Dr. Mark Schecker, Coastal Carolina Allergy.

The test is to find out whether Jan Fulton's stuffy nose is a cold or allergies. Dr. Schecker says the allergens are out, and attacking. "Particularly seasonal allergies will tend to cause things like fits of sneezing and really itchy eyes or itching in the back of the throat."

Weeds are the main culprit, and ragweed is everywhere. Unlike the spring time when tree pollen that lands on your car, these allergens fly undetected. "It's invisible microscopic pollen, things that you can't see, that are floating in the air and causing problems," said Dr. Schecker.

To escape, you can close the windows and blast the air conditioning, but beware. Inside buildings is where mold could be hiding, which also causes reactions.

"Well for the worst allergy sufferers, sometimes there is no relief," Dr. Schecker told NewsChannel 15. But, he adds, many allergies can be treated with medication.

Here are some hints to help tell whether you are suffering from a cold or an allergy:

- Infections generally cause a fever... allergies do not
- Colds bring colored mucus... with allergies, the mucus is clear
- Allergies tend to cause itching, and allergy symptoms last longer than a week. The seasonal ones come every spring and fall.